

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A method for making an opening in a vessel, comprising:

 piercing the wall of the vessel with a piercing element;

 retracting said piercing element at least partially into a tube having a lumen; and

 moving said piercing element away from the longitudinal centerline of said tube, after said retracting.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein said moving includes moving said piercing element through an opening in a side wall of said tube.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein a member is attached to said piercing element and extends through said opening; and wherein said moving includes applying force to said member.

11. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein said moving includes separating said piercing element from said tube.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein said ~~removing~~ moving comprises pivoting said piercing element at least partially through said opening.

13. (original) The method of claim 9, further comprising storing said piercing element adjacent to said tube.

14. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein said retracting cuts a tissue plug from the wall of the vessel.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising retaining the tissue plug with said piercing element.

16. (currently amended) A method for making an opening in the wall of a hollow tissue structure, comprising:

 piercing the wall of the hollow tissue structure, at a location in the wall through which fluid previously had been substantially prevented from escaping, with a piercing element to create an opening therethrough;
 retracting the piercing element toward an opening in a body to cut a tissue plug from the wall of the hollow tissue structure; ~~and~~
 capturing the tissue plug with said piercing element; and
 moving said piercing element away from the longitudinal centerline of said body after said capturing.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein said body is a tube.

18. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said opening in said body has a cutting edge defined thereon.

19. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein said piercing element includes a pointed tip and an anvil surface proximal to said pointed tip, and wherein said retracting moves said anvil surface toward said opening in said body to cut the tissue plug.

20. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein said piercing is performed by urging said piercing element distally with spring force.

21. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein said piercing is performed by manually advancing said piercing element in the distal direction.

22. (canceled)

23. (currently amended) The method of ~~claim 22~~ claim 16, wherein said body includes a side opening defined therein; and wherein said moving is through said side opening.